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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: KAZAKH-AMERICAN FREE UNIVERSITY
PROMOTES AMERICAN VALUES IN UST-KAMENOGORSK

11. SUMMARY. Poloff met in Ust-Kamenogorsk on September 10 with administrators, faculty, and students from the Kazakh-American Free University (KAFU). KAFU President Yerezhep Mambetkazyev gave thanks for the U.S. government's support for his university. KAFU students expressed satisfaction with the high quality of education at KAFU and the opportunities the university provides for internships and study in the United States. KAFU promotes civic leadership and volunteerism through required community projects. END SUMMARY.

KAZAKH-AMERICAN FREE UNIVERSITY THANKFUL FOR U.S. SUPPORT

12. Poloff met on September 10 in Ust-Kamenogorsk with administrators, faculty, and students from the Kazakh-American Free University (KAFU). KAFU is fully privately-funded, and offers degrees in business, law, and information systems. The university, which has approximately 3000 students, is located in a new building. KAFU President Yerezhep Mambetkazyev is a former Minister of Education and reportedly a close friend of President Nazarbayev. Nazarbayev is an honorary professor at KAFU and presented diplomas to its first graduating class. Mambetkazyev enthusiastically described to poloff the history of the school and his dream of providing an educational bridge for Kazakhstani students to study in America. He thanked former U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan John Ordway, the U.S. Embassy in Astana, and the American Corner in Ust-Kamenogorsk for their assistance to KAFU and expressed a wish that the Ambassador visit the university on his first trip to Ust-Kamenogorsk.

STUDENTS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT JOB MARKET

13. Poloff met with four KAFU students who had been selected by the university to attend Mambetkazyev's briefing, interacting informally with them without university officials present. The students all spoke excellent English, and had

resided in the United States on short exchanges programs arranged by the school and its primary American partner institutions, the Marshall Christensen Foundation and Northwest Nazarene College of Idaho. One student received a scholarship to KAFU, while the others are funded by their families. One is studying business and had done a U.S. internship at Intel, another is studying law and had done a U.S. internship at a center for juvenile law, and the remaining two are studying business, and have done internships in U.S. banks. All the students told poloff that they were confident that their KAFU education would enable them to find good jobs. The students said that through the university they have met KAFU alumni who had found good positions. (NOTE: In his briefing, Mambetkazyev emphasized that KAFU alumni work in many leading private companies and in various Kazakhstani government agencies, as well as in foreign embassies in Astana as locally-employed staff. He particularly noted that one alumna had worked at the U.S. Embassy in Astana. END NOTE.)

STUDENTS PRAISE UNIVERSITY FOR ITS STRONG PROGRAMS

¶4. The KAFU students highlighted the university's intensive English-language education, exchange opportunities, and the KAFU leadership program as the fundamentals of KAFU's high-quality education. KAFU students that choose to participate in its rigorous "American program" typically spend one year in English preparatory classes and subsequently take most of their required classes in English. The school employs several foreign faculty members to teach year-round, including four American teachers that poloff met during Mambetkazyev's briefing. As many as 40 foreign

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faculty members also teach at the school every year on rotational exchanges from partner institutions abroad, though many stay only for brief periods of just one month. The KAFU students also praised the fact that the intensive English-language coursework is typically followed by opportunities to participate in academic exchanges and internships in the United States. Scholarships are available for students who do not have access to sufficient independent funding.

¶5. KAFU claims to represent the best of American values, particularly the concepts of civic leadership and volunteerism that contribute to a strong civil society. Each student is required to design his own community project -- for example, engaging fellow students to help build houses for the poor or organizing fellow students to teach English in rural villages. One of the four American teachers, who had been a Peace Corps volunteer in rural East Kazakhstan oblast before becoming a KAFU faculty member, talked about the positive impression KAFU students had made by coming to a village to help teach. Similarly, all of the KAFU students said that the project requirement was one of the most empowering experiences of their education.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO ADOPT AMERICAN-STYLE PROGRAMS

¶6. Mambetkazyev told poloff that KAFU's Vice President for International Programs, U.S. citizen Daniel Ballast, has been a key to KAFU's success. Ballast explained to poloff that international partners contribute approximately \$300,000 to KAFU programs every year. He noted that Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education is encouraging institutions of higher education to adopt American-style educational programs and establish partnerships with foreign universities. KAFU, of course, has been doing just that.

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